

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /082 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8166

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 5318

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, NI

SUBJECT: ONE MEMBER'S VIEW OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

1. PAUL UNONGO, MEMBER OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA), CALLED ON EMBOFF TO REQUEST FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE FOR PROPOSED VISIT TO U.S. TO DEVELOP BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. CONGRESS. (SEE SEPTTEL). IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION HE PROVIDED HIS VIEWS ON HOW THE CA IS OPERATING. UNONGO HAS EMBERGED AS A LEADER IN THE ASSEMBLY AS A WHOLE, SPOKESMAN FOR THE MIDDLE BELT MEMBERS, AND LEADER IN THE ANTI-SHARIA GROUP.

2. UNONGO FEELS THAT THE MILITARY MADE A MISTAKE NOT TO ALLOW THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES BEFORE THE CA WAS ELECTED. MANY OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE CA HAVE DEVELOPED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF PARTY DISCIPLINE. AFTER MONTHS OF WORK A "POLITICAL BLOC" HAS DEVELOPED IN THE CA AND, WHILE ALL MEMBERS CAN VOICE THEIR VIEWS ON ISSUES, LEADERS MEET TO DECIDE COMPROMISES AND ACCEPTABLE POSITIONS TO BE PRESENTED ON THE FLOOR.

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3. THE SHARIA ISSUE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE MAJORITY HAD DECIDED AND ISSUE, BUT A MINORITY OBJECTD. THIS ISSUE WAS A TEST OF POLITICAL POWER - "WHETHER THE OLD POWER STRUCTURE WILL BE ALLOWED TO DOMINATE, OR A NEW ONE WILL BE CREATED." IN UNONGO'S VIEW THE SHARIA ISSUE IS

NOW ON THE "TRASH HEAP" AND THE NORTH HAS
LEARNED IT NO LONGER CONTROLS NIGERIA. THE
ISSUE CANNOT BE RAISED AGAIN BECAUSE, "THE REST
OF US WON'T ACCEPT IT." THE NORTH HAS NO CHOICE
BUT TO ACCEPT REALITY.

4. THE ONLY OTHER MAJOR ISSUE FACING THE CA IS
THE QUESTION OF REVENUE ALLOCATION. THIS WILL
BE DECIDED THROUGH POLITICAL COMPROMISE.
CROSS RIVER AND RIVERS STATE MEMBERS WHO AS
REPRESENTATIVE OF OIL PRODUCING AREAS HAVE
VOCAL MINORITY VIEWS WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO
ACCEPT THE COMPROMISE IN ORDER TO REMAIN AS
MEMBERS OF THE "BLOC."

5. UNONGO BELIEVES THAT UNLESS SOMEONE ATTEMPTS
TO RAISE THE SHARIA ISSUE, OR THERE ARE OTHER
UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS, THE CA WILL WIND UP ITS
WORK BY MID-JUNE.

6. COMMENT: UNONGO IS A YOUNG (41) OUTSPOKEN
TIV REPRESENTING BENUE IN THE CA. HE IS
SECRETARY OF THE JOS-BASED COUNCIL FOR UNDER-
STANDING AND SOLIDARITY (CUS), WHICH IS A MIDDLE
BELT POLITICAL GROUPING. HE HARBORS A STRONG
RESENTMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL NORTHERN ESTABLISH-
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MENT. THE "POLITICAL BLOC" TO WHICH HE
REFERS APPARENTLY REPRESENTS WHAT HE VIEWS AS
THE FUTURE FOR YOUNG LEADERS OF NIGERIA (INCLUDING
HIMSELF).
WYMAN

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NNN

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